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OCI No. 0755/65
5 February 1965

DCI BRIEFING
FOR THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

THAILAND

I. In Thailand, Prime Minister Thanom's government has assumed control smoothly over the year since the death of Marshal Sarit, but the transition cannot yet be considered completed.

A. There have been continuing rumors of coup plotting among various elements of the ruling military clique. One plot was squelched by a series of arrests in late November and early December.

B. The present government's viability rests largely on the informal alliance between the Prime Minister and strongman Praphat, who is concurrently deputy premier, interior minister, and commander-in-chief of the Thai armed forces.

1. The basis of the alliance is partly personal. Praphat's son recently married

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Thanom's daughter. The durability of the alliance will depend on how long both men--and especially Praphat--find it politically useful.

II. No matter who Sarit's long-term successor is, it seems likely that he will come from the select military group which has ruled Thailand since 1932.

A. It also seems likely that there will be little change in Thailand's pro-Western foreign policy and membership in SEATO.

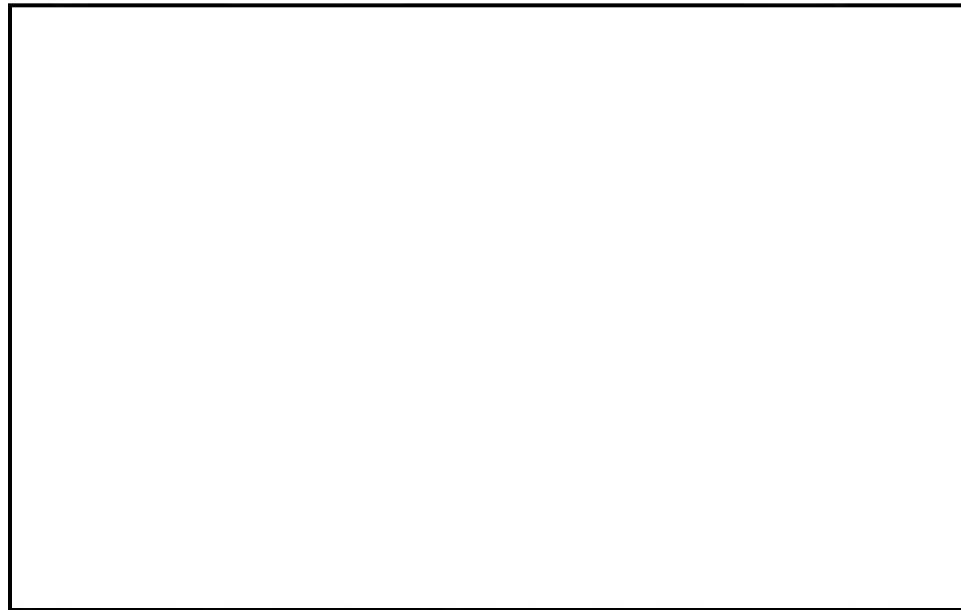
1. The Thais have staunchly supported US policy in South Vietnam and Laos, although they have at times privately expressed the view that US policy is not strong enough, and concern that the restraints other allies seek to place on the US may leave Thailand out on a limb.
2. Bangkok has given a limited amount of tangible support to South Vietnam, including the training of South Vietnamese pilots.

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III. There are some disquieting signs of increased Communist subversion in Northeast Thailand-- including three apparently politically inspired assassinations and propaganda activity.

A. The Communists also have been increasing their propaganda activity throughout Thailand. Relatively sophisticated Communist propaganda has been distributed in Bangkok and elsewhere.

1. Peiping and Hanoi, recently have been giving front groups unusual attention. This may signal a new Communist subversion effort or it may be an effort to unite the various fronts under one banner in anticipation of Thai elections expected later this year.

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